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ABSTRACT

This evaluative report of a Head Start program discusses gains in academic achievement and social development of 248 preschool children as measured by standardized tests, parent questionnaires, and staff surveys. A pre- and postadministration of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) was used as a basis for the measurement of student gains (both an English and Spanish version were administered). A parent questionnaire and staff survey focused on: (1) the main target areas of pupil changes (conceptual and verbal skills, emotional and social development); and (2) the degree of parent involvement in the program. Based on the information collected and analyzed, the evaluation shows that the program has substantially met its stated goals: significant gains were made in language development and parents and staff members were highly supportive of the program. An independent, on-going longitudinal study of the program collaborates the results of this evaluative report and is contained in the appendix. (CS)

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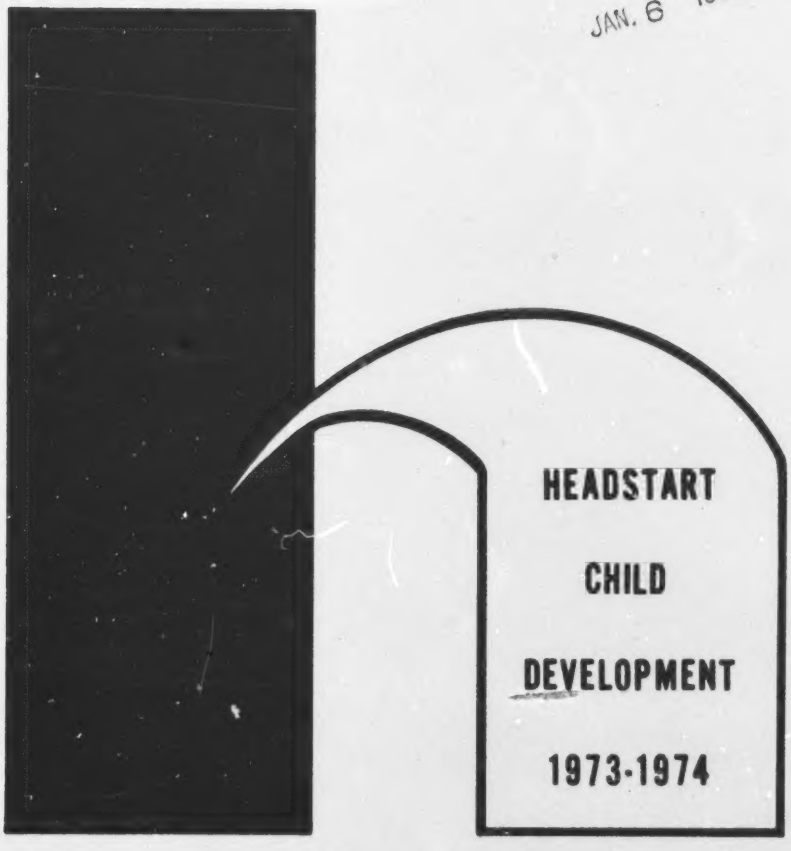

HARTFORD MOVES AHEAD

An Evaluative Report

HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS·249 HIGH STREET·HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06103

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HEAD START - CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Hartford Public Schools
249 High Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

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HEAD START - CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Background

Hartford's Head Start - Child Development (HSCD) Program was the original preschool program for this city; in terms of originality, the program was the city's own. Initiated in the fall of 1965 on a pilot basis with local funding, the program has since developed and expanded to the point where some 460 preschool youngsters are served each year. Over its nine-year history, the program was supported and expanded from various funding sources; OEO, ESEA and SADC monies were used in various combinations over the years. During the 1974-75 school year, the program was funded by OEO, ESEA, and SADC, with these basic grants supplemented by two special Office of Child Development programs designed to identify strategies for work with handicapped preschool youngsters and to design a model for early childhood medical interventions as well.

Over its long history, the HSCD program has attempted to intervene during the early years of childhood at the most critical point in the poverty cycle. Since the literature and sad experiences have demonstrated that the creation of learning patterns, emotional development, and the formation of an individual's expectations and aspirations occur rapidly at the preschool age, for the child of poverty, opportunities are clearly needed to provide a firm foundation for success. This positive thrust, intended to substitute success for ultimate failure is the concept upon which the HSCD program is

based.

Statement of Needs

As stated in the funding proposal, then, the following needs were addressed by this component.

1. Improving the child's mental processes and skills with particular attention to conceptual and verbal skills.
2. Helping the emotional and social development of the child by encouraging self-confidence, spontaneity, curiosity and self discipline.
3. Establishing patterns and expectations of success for the child which will create a climate of confidence for his future learning efforts.
4. Improving the child's physical health and physical abilities.

Objectives

Stemming from these needs, and bolstered by research findings and later experimentation both inside and outside of Hartford, a series of program objectives were developed. These objectives grew out of the comprehensive early childhood methodology which had been developed during the intervening years. Although carrying the name of the national program, Follow Through too was uniquely Hartford's own: it was an individualized program which recognized the needs of urban youngsters and was conducted in a free and open environment. Target areas and resultant program objectives included the following:

A. Target Areas

1. Individualize the program toward the self-directed learner.
2. Increased language skills.
3. Integration of learning experiences.
4. A positive self-image and feeling of worth.
5. Staff attitudinal change toward their roles, the other staff members and training, both on-going and in-service.
6. Increased parental participation on policy committees which affect the child's education and community change.
7. Extended health and social services.
8. The development of career ladders for staff which utilize staff training programs.
9. Increasing the dialogue between the administration and the project parents.
10. Increasing time for staff training.
11. Increasing time for parent conferences. Articulation of the program with other childhood programs.
12. Leadership training for staff and parents.
13. Increased employment for parents.

B. Goals

1. To provide a comprehensive child development program for each child including handicapped children which will develop in each child and his family a feeling of self-worth.

2. To provide a preschool experience in which children feel wanted, accepted and recognized because of their unique individualities.
3. To provide a program which will motivate children to learn and experience joy and self-confidence through learning.
4. To provide a program of learning based on the individual needs of each child's developmental rate of growth and learning.
5. To create a learning environment which will help each child's emotional and social development by encouraging self-expression, self-discipline and curiosity.
6. To improve and expand each child's ability to think, reason and speak clearly in order to equip him with the basic necessary tools and skills needed to promote learning which will enable him to experience success in life daily.
7. To encourage and develop good health habits and attitudes which will result in improved health for each child and his family.
8. To increase the health and social services available to each child and his family and to help the community become more responsive to these needs with improved delivery of services within the neighborhood.
9. To work constructively with the child and his family to develop

a cohesive family group in which the child feels secure and is able to get along with others in the family.

10. To help children and their families to get wider and more varied meaningful experiences which will broaden their horizons, increase their ease of conversation and improve their understanding of the community and world in which they live and be able to participate successfully in it.
11. To involve parents in the education of their children. Not only as observers or volunteers but as decision makers.
12. To affect changes constructively where needed whether it is in the school, the home, or the community at large.
13. To train parents and staff in early childhood through on-going in-service which will help parents and staff to work more effectively with children.
14. To extend services to Head Start rather than duplicate existing services.
15. To make the necessary linkages with institutions of higher learning to help make available relevant college courses for parents and staff.
16. To make the community more responsive to the needs of children and their families.

Component Description

During the 1973-74 school year Head Start Child Development operated

in one church facility, one community facility and in eight schools. Locations and enrollments included the following:

Locations	Students
Ann Street Bilingual	20
Arsenal School	40
Barnard-Brown School	20
Essex Street	20
Frank O. Jones	60
Kinsella School	40
Old Clark Street School	60
Vine Street School	40
Warburton Chapel	60
Wish School	60

Operating from September through June on the 180 day Board of Education calendar, each teacher taught single five-hour sessions each day. In addition, one hour at the end of each day was allocated for team planning, in-service staff meetings, parent conferences and home visits. In the spring, a pilot program was begun to intensify services at a lower cost by having each teacher work with two three-hour sessions. This modification was operationalized in the fall of the 1974-75 school year. In addition, the program continued to employ a Spanish-speaking social worker assistant who worked with the most heavily impacted Spanish-speaking centers.

To serve the 460 youngsters who were involved in the program, a substantial staff was required. Staff requirements provided by SADC and ESEA funds included the following:

1 Director

2 Social Workers

5 Paraprofessionals

Children were initially selected as follows: 90% must meet OEO poverty guidelines; at least 10% of children enrolled must be handicapped; 10% may be over income but recommended by other agencies because they had special needs. Note here that despite the poverty criterion, children consistently represented target areas evidencing severe indices of language deprivation; a primary focus of the program.

The daily schedule for youngsters was kept as flexible as was possible, and changed as the children developed socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually. Emphasis was placed on children working individually at their own developmental levels. As success and satisfaction was experienced in school, a positive self-image emerges.

A program of varied activities was planned to meet the needs of children. Blocks of time were set aside for individualized instruction on a one-to-one basis, as well as for small group activities. Opportunity was also provided for developing skills in language, concept formation, motor coordination, problem solving and experimentation while creative expression was encouraged through art, music and body movement. In order to meet the children's nutritional needs a balanced breakfast was planned and served to children attending the morning session while children attending afternoon sessions received lunch. Quiet times were included so that the children could rest and relax.

In addition to the services provided to the children, health, nutrition, and social services were also provided to the families and the children as

needed. Special provisions were made for services to the handicapped children who were enrolled in the program; some 420 youngsters in all.

Parent involvement was one of the program's strong suits. Three structures were set up to involve the parents.

1. Head Start Center Committee, made up of center parents only, functioned at the center level.
2. The Head Start Policy Committee, operating at the delegate agency level, was made up of at least 50% parents and 50% community agency representatives.
3. A Head Start Policy Council, at the grantee level, represented the CRT level with at least 50% parents and 50% community agency representatives.

In order to insure adequate staff support to the program, supplementary staff training and career development is provided by an OCD Training and Technical Assistance grant to Yale University and through Head Start Supplementary Training funds which are allocated to Eastern Connecticut State College. Head Start staff were also enrolled in the Career Opportunities Program funded through Model Cities. In addition to these services, added inputs into the program were also reported.

Parents and volunteers gave 11,532 3/4 hours of volunteer time to the program during the 1973-74 school year. This increased parental participation in the classroom served as a link between the home and the school which enabled the parents to re-enforce at home what the child had learned

at school.

Parent participation in workshops at the centers enabled parents to develop learning materials and educational games using scrounged materials. This resulted in the use of many materials at home which were used to teach language concepts and develop basic skills.

Student nurses from the Hartford Hospital School of Nursing and the University of Connecticut School of Nursing volunteered to work in Head Start to gain first hand experience in working with preschool children. These nurses helped to provide the necessary one-to-one relationship with the children needed to meet their individual needs.

In addition to the foregoing volunteer activities, a graduate student from the University of Connecticut School of Social Work worked closely with parents at the Frank O. Jones School in developing parent education programs and served as a parent enabler to help secure necessary social and other services for parents and their families.

Evaluation Plan

The evaluation of the HSCD program once again used the methodology which had been developed so as to adhere to the testing restrictions which had been imposed initially by OEO and continued under the Office of Child Development. First, a pre and post administration of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) was used as a basis for the measurement of student gains. Data were collected by group testers and analyzed by Dr. Wallace Roby of the State Department of Education. Next, a parent questionnaire which had

been constructed from the ideas and considerations which grew out of meetings held by the coordinator and her staff focused on the two areas of pupil changes and on the degree of parent program involvement in the program was administered. And finally, a survey form based on the same considerations was administered to staff. Other instruments, to include the contemplated Follow Through evaluation which was to have provided the observational scale and video taping was abandoned for lack of funding and because the questionnaires which had been distributed to kindergarten teachers in conjunction with a previous year's evaluation had shown such salutary responses that a similar inquiry would provide no added program information.

Question

How do HSCD children fare in terms of language development after 9 full months of the program?

Procedures and Findings

The following was reported by Dr. Wallace Roby, Consultant for the Connecticut State Department of Education, who assumed responsibility for this phase of the evaluation. Dr. Roby's report is as follows:

1973-74 CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM RESULTS BASED ON TESTING

The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) was administered to each Child Development participant in 21 classes situated in 11 schools and churches in Hartford during 1973-74. The instrument was administered twice, at the beginning and near the end of the school year. Both an English and a Spanish version were administered.

The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test is an individually administered test which measures receptive vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary are words a child understands, but not necessarily words he uses in speech. For very young children, the PPVT is often interpreted broadly as a measure of children's language development.

As with most testing over a period of time, results could not be obtained for all the children initially tested. Of the 346 children pretested, complete results were obtained for only 248 children. The reasons for losses were as follows:

For 63 English speaking children,

- 27 were absent for posttesting, and
- 36 withdrew from school before posttesting occurred.

For 35 Spanish speaking children,

- 15 were absent for posttesting, and
- 20 withdrew from school before posttesting occurred.

The results obtained for each of the Child Development Centers is presented next. "N" is the number of pupils, "CA" is the average chronological age in years and months at the time of testing, and "MA" is a measure of language development in years and months.

PPVT RESULTS FOR THE 1973-74 CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
Hartford

School / Teacher	PPVT Administered in Spanish N	Form A CA / MA	Form B CA / MA	Language Gain	PPVT Administered in English N	Form A CA / MA	Form B CA / MA	Language Gain
Ann Street		4-8	5-0		-	-	-	
Gonalez	12	3-2	4-11	(21 mos)		-	-	
Arsenal		4-4	5-0			4-5	5-1	
Pattyfote	1	5-5	4-4		12	3-7	4-0	(3 mos)
Arsenal		4-11	5-5			4-4	5-0	
Roebuck	1	3-8	4-9		11	3-3	3-7	(4 mos)
Barnard Brown		4-5	5-1			4-2	4-10	
DiRoma	7	3-6	4-11	(17 mos)	3	3-3	4-4	
Clark Street		-	-			4-5	5-1	
McDugold	-	-	-		13	3-4	4-6	(14 mos)
Clark Street		-	-			4-2	4-10	
Miller(A.M.)	-	-	-		12	3-0	3-10	(10 mos)
Clark Street		-	-			4-5	5-0	
Miller (P.M.)	-	-	-		5	3-0	4-0	(12 mos)
Essex Street		4-5	5-0			4-5	5-0	
Smith	7	3-4	4-11	(19 mos)	5	3-10	5-6	(20 mos)
Good Shepherd		4-4	4-11			4-6	5-2	
Quispe	3	3-4	5-1		6	3-4	4-2	(10 mos)
Jones		-	-			4-3	4-10	
Long	-	-	-		12	3-0	3-11	(11 mos)
Jones		-	-			4-4	5-0	
Kane	-	-	-		19	3-4	4-4	(12 mos)
Kinsella		4-4	4-10			4-3	4-11	
Melendez	9	2-11	3-11	(12 mos)	2	3-3	4-6	
Kinsella		4-8	5-4			4-4	5-0	
Ross	1	2-11	4-11		10	3-3	4-4	(13 mos)
Vine Street		-	-			4-2	4-10	
McFadden	-	-	-		12	3-6	4-6	(12 mos)
Vine Street		-	-			4-4	4-11	
Shulman	-	-	-		14	3-4	4-9	(17 mos)
Warburton Chapel		4-5	5-2			4-7	5-2	
Cordner	7	2-8	4-4	(20 mos)	4	3-8	4-4	
Warburton Chapel		4-6	5-2			4-5	5-1	
Richards	3	2-7	4-10		9	3-6	3-11	(5 mos)
Warburton Chapel		4-5	5-1			4-5	5-0	
Ramirez	5	2-11	4-7	(20 mos)	5	3-2	4-2	(12 mos)
Wish		4-3	4-10			4-3	4-10	
Cheney	8	3-2	4-7	(17 mos)	5	3-3	3-11	(8 mos)
Wish		4-5	5-0			4-5	5-1	
Womack	7	3-3	4-3	(12 mos)	7	2-11	3-10	(11 mos)
Wish		4-0	4-8			4-3	4-11	
Maldonado	4	2-4	3-10		7	3-2	3-10	(8 mos)
11 settings		4-5	5-0			4-4	5-0	
21 sessions	75	3-1	4-7	(18 mos)	173	3-3	4-2	(11 mos)
Combination of English and Spanish:		4-4	5-0					
		3-3	4-2	(13 mos)				

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Total Group Results

The table of results indicates that 8 months elapsed between the pre and posttesting of Headstart children while their language development increased an average of 13 months. This is judged as excellent progress.

It should be pointed out, however, that the language development of the Hartford Headstart children was low at pretesting compared to the PPVT standardization group. And even though they gained exceedingly well over the school year, their language development level at posttesting was 8 months lower than the PPVT standardization group.

In the previous year evaluation, it was shown that children having the Headstart-Child Development experience were significantly ahead of their counterpart in seven Hartford inner city schools when their PPVT scores were compared near the end of the kindergarten school year.

Together, the two years of evidence show that the Headstart-Child Development Program enhanses children's language development.

Variation of Results for Spanish and English PPVT Versions

Results for Peabody tests administered in Spanish tended to show better progress for children than Peabody tests administered in English. Since the children did not differ greatly in age at the time of pretesting, maturation cannot account for the differences found.

Two other factors, however, probably influenced the differences found.

First, a single form (Form A) was used for both the pre and posttest Spanish version of the Peabody, while different forms of the English version were used for the pre and posttesting. This allows for some "practice effect" to occur in favor of the children receiving the Spanish version.

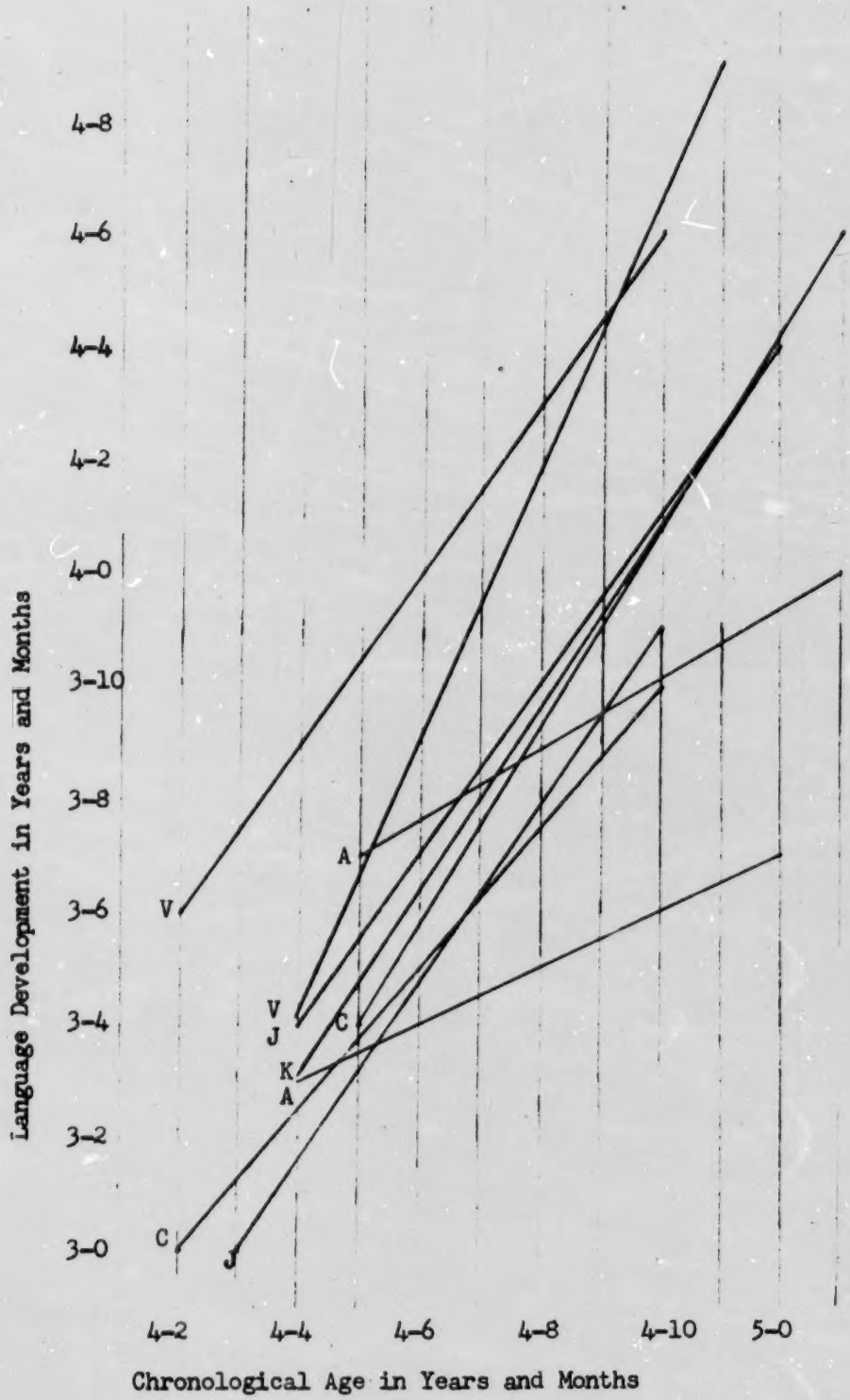
Secondly, Peabody standardization is provided for the English version of the test, not the Spanish. Consequently, we are not sure the standardization data accurately interprets the Spanish version scores.

It is recommended that the Inter American Test of General Ability be administered individually to Spanish speaking Headstarters in the future. This test permits both an English and a Spanish version of children's progress in numbers and in verbal understanding.

Variation of Results from Center to Center

Concentrating on results of children receiving the English version of the Peabody, it can be observed from the table that language gain for Headstart classes varied from an average gain of 3 months to 17 months where the sample size was 10 or more children. An illustration is presented on the next page of the average language results for children in the nine centers where at least 10 children figured in the averaging.

Language Growth of English-speaking Headstart Children
in Nine Hartford Settings



Language growth of children in these centers are illustrated as line segments connecting their average pre and posttest scores... the steeper the slope of the line, the greater the progress. Language age growth has been charted against children's average age in months at pre and posttesting. Two factors have a bearing on the language progress illustrated that the reader should keep in mind.

First, the number of children making up the average scores are small and therefore fluctuate greatly if a single score is very high or very low.

Secondly, classes with the lower average pretest scores tend to show the greater gains from pre to posttesting.

Keeping these two factors in mind and noting the slopes of the line segments, it can be stated that the children at Clark Street, Jones, Kinsella, and Vine Street made greater language growth than the children at the two Arsenal centers.

Analysis of Results by:

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Question

What were the reactions of parents to their youngsters HSCD experiences?

Procedures and Findings

As has been noted, an HSCD Parents Survey was distributed to some 460 HSCD parents in the spring of the school year. Responses from 143 parents, about 31% of the whole, were tallied, converted to percentages, with results reported as follows:

HEADSTART-CHILD DEVELOPMENT PARENT SURVEY

Directions

How do you feel about Hartford's Headstart-Child Development? Please help us to learn more about the program by answering the following questions. Answer by checking the proper line.

It is not necessary to put your name on this paper.

Since your child has been in Headstart-Child Development, have you noticed that he or she:

	Almost Never	Sometimes	Usually
1. Wants to go to school?	.7%	9.2%	90.1%
2. Seems to recognize and understand numbers?	2.8%	35.9%	61.3%
3. Gets along better with other children?	1.4%	15.0%	83.6%
4. Is beginning to understand many things?	1.4%	17.7%	80.9%
5. Seems to talk more clearly?	1.4%	14.2%	84.4%
6. Is able to call more things by name?	.7%	11.9%	87.4%
7. Has become very curious about many things?	1.4%	18.3%	80.3%
8. Is proud of school accomplishments?	2.1%	14.2%	83.7%
9. Seems to enjoy school?	1.4%	13.3%	85.3%
10. Can do more things without your help?	2.9%	25.5%	71.5%

To what extent have you been involved with the Headstart-Child Development program this year?

	Almost Never	Sometimes	Frequently
11. Visiting my child's center?	12.3%	42.8%	44.9%
12. Working with the teachers?	25.8%	49.2%	25.0%
13. Serving on an advisory council?	64.4%	23.7%	11.9%
14. Helping during field trip?	51.6%	32.8%	15.6%

How well does Headstart-Child Development respond to student and parent needs by:

	Almost None	Some	Much
15. Providing your child with extra help when needed?	1.5%	31.8%	66.7%
16. Helping you to understand your child's school?	4.4%	31.1%	64.4%
17. Allowing to suggest program changes or improvements?	6.5%	42.3%	51.2%
18. Getting fathers involved in policy making?	36.0%	36.0%	28.0%
19. Trying to do what is best for children?	0%	12.9%	87.1%
20. Informing you of your child's growth and progress?	0%	16.8%	83.2%

How do you feel about the Headstart-Child Development Program? Please comment:

From the preceding table the reader will note that a vast majority of the parents responded favorably to the questions which had been asked them about the effects of the HSCD program on their youngsters. These parent ratings coupled to their written comments were highly supportive of the program; a pattern which repeated that reported during the previous year.

In contrast, items which related to the parents' actual involvement in the HSCD Program, indicated that about two-thirds of the parents, on an average had participated in program activities. Most of the parents indicated that they had visited a Center (87%) or had worked with the teachers (74%), 64% of the parents had served on an advisory council only 35% had helped during a field trip (48%). The overall percentage of involvement (62%) was deemed appropriate, however to the scope of the program, and to the various activities which were conducted.

Question

How did the receiving teachers view the results of the HSCD program at the kindergarten level?

Procedures

A specially constructed questionnaire was distributed by the HSCD director to city kindergarten teachers who had enrolled HSCD youngsters in the spring of the 1973-74 school year. On this questionnaire each teacher was asked to compare the HSCD children as a group on each of 22 variables, and on a Fall to Spring basis. Items had been selected by the HSCD staff and were based upon performances which were expected to occur over the course of the

program. Responses were tallied, converted to percentages, and these are shown in the following table.

STAFF SURVEY

Compare your Head Start children as a group to each of the following items.

September Head Start					Item	June Head Start				
Low		Average		High		Low		Average		High
0	0	44	33	23	1. Class attendance	7	0	17	48	28
11	21	50	4	14	2. Having confidence	0	0	31	38	31
0	17	38	31	14	3. Being happy at school	0	0	0	20	80
13	23	37	10	17	4. Adequacy of large muscle development	0	0	14	33	53
20	30	30	13	7	5. Ability to integrate motor & sensory activity	0	0	13	50	37
30	13	33	20	4	6. Adequacy of auditory perception	0	0	10	63	27
14	28	36	11	11	7. Helping other pupils in the class	0	0	7	30	63
28	29	25	11	7	8. Adequacy of vocabulary	0	0	21	29	50
7	47	25	7	14	9. Ability to communicate	0	0	14	33	53
13	30	37	10	10	10. Getting along with others in the class	0	0	21	38	41
20	43	27	10	0	11. Concept formation	0	0	26	39	35
7	31	45	10	7	12. Adequacy of self-image	0	0	7	21	72
6	39	49	6	0	13. Success orientation	0	0	32	13	55
30	33	33	4	0	14. Development of word attack skills	0	10	37	40	13
19	39	35	7	0	15. Ability to comprehend	0	0	19	39	42
13	16	19	36	16	16. Getting along with the teacher	0	0	0	19	81
7	13	35	10	35	17. Curiosity	0	0	6	13	81
6	26	29	0	39	18. Wanting to learn	0	0	13	19	68
39	29	32	0	0	19. Development of small-muscle writing skills	0	0	32	39	29
19	36	32	13	0	20. Recall abilities	0	6	26	45	23
21	38	21	17	3	21. Understanding of basic	0	0	24	59	17
29	45	3	16	7	22. Independence	0	0	19	29	52

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Findings

As can be seen from the preceding table, there was an apparent swing in ratings from September to June over the project year. Here one can quickly note that while many of the fall ratings were relatively low, spring ratings with one exception ranged in the average or higher categories. Given these rating changes, a substantial degree of improvement was reported by the teachers. For the one area in which an average-low rating was recorded, development of word attack skills, even here substantial rating increases could be reported since while 96% of the ratings were in the low or average category in September, by spring fully 90% had reached the average or high rating columns.

Question

What other evidences are available to examine various data collected on the HSCD program?

Findings

The third chapter of an on-going HSCD study, conducted by University of Connecticut professors Dr. H. A. Goodstein and S. Owen has continued over an 8-year period to examine various indices of program success as these affected the original group of Hartford HSCD youngsters. In a specially prepared summary report, the researchers reported lowered retention rates, higher test scores, and fewer special class placements. The actual summary is contained in the appendix.

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Recommendations

With respect to the continuation of the HSCD program, the Director recommended that the program be funded to hire two additional social workers to adequately meet the needs of families served by this program which enrolls 90% of its children from families living at or below the poverty level guidelines.

Summary and Conclusions

On the basis of the data which have been presented and analyzed, several findings can be reported:

1. An independent analysis of PPVT test results showed that while Hartford's HSCD children started the year some 18 months lower than their age norm in language development, 8 months later these same children had improved an average of 13 months, and were now only 8 months below language development expectancy. These results were interpreted as representing excellent progress in language development during the HSCD and kindergarten years.
2. In similar fashion, when the PPVT results were compared for HSCD youngsters in seven Hartford inner-city schools, these children were making significantly better progress in language development than were their peers.
3. Parents were highly supportive of the HSCD program in terms of its effects upon their youngsters. At the same time they also reported that while a large percentage of the parents had visited the centers

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and worked with the teachers, smaller numbers reported serving on an advisory council or helping out during a field trip.

4. When kindergarten teachers were asked to compare HSCD children as a group, on 22 performance variables, substantial degrees of improvement were reported from Fall to Spring of the year.

5. A longitudinal University of Connecticut follow-up study of HSCD youngsters eight years later reported that as a group, fewer retentions and special class placements coupled to higher test scores were recorded when these youngsters were compared to a comparable peer group.

Based on the information which has been collected and analyzed, it would appear that the HSCD program has substantially met its stated objectives and that the services rendered are perceived favorably, not only by the parents of the youngsters who were involved but by receiving teachers as well. Further, it would also appear on the basis of two independent studies that the HSCD program has produced favorable test and performance indications of success, and these on a longitudinal basis.

Evaluation Office
December 1974

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APPENDIX

EVALUATION NOTES

RESEARCH NEWS IN BRIEF

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL

566-6534

HEADSTART REVISITED: A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF HARTFORD HEADSTART AND NON-HEADSTART PARTICIPANTS IN THE SIXTH GRADE

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The University of Connecticut

This report represents the third chapter in a longitudinal evaluation of the Hartford Head Start program which began during the 1965-1966 academic year. In the previous two chapters, it was reported that the Head Start program resulted in significant changes in the psycholinguistic characteristics and learning aptitudes of the preschool children upon their exit from the program (Cawley, 1966). However, when these children were compared to a contrast group using a battery of psychoeducational tests at the beginning of their first grade, two years later no significant differences were recorded. (Cawley, Burrow, & Goodstein, 1968).

This third evaluation focused upon academic achievement and the number of retentions in grade or special class placements which had occurred among previously identified Head Start and Non-Head Start children who should have reached the sixth grade during the 1972-73 academic year. To obtain relevant information, several specific evaluative questions were raised. These questions and some findings have been reported as follows; note that while findings have been summarized for brevity, they are described fully in the formal report.

1. Was participation in Head Start a factor in preventing retention in grade and/or special class placement?

   When three Head Start samples were pooled, 9.5% of the Head Start children were retained and 5% received special class placement. These figures compared with a retention rate of 22% and a special education placement rate of 10% in the non-Head Start sample. Also, data seemed to indicate that Head Start participation was a significant factor in a child's later involvement in Project Concern since 14% of the Head Start sample but only 4% of the non-Head Start sample were eventually assigned to the project.

2. Were there differences between children who were enrolled in Head Start and non-Head Start children on achievement measures administered at sixth grade?

   When data from the three Head Start samples were compared, a pattern of higher test scores for the Head Start group which had not been followed emerged

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on the group administered intelligence scales. In addition these youngsters performed approximately one grade level higher in reading and one-half grade higher in mathematics. When the three Head Start samples were combined, differences between Head Start groups was not statistically signficant.

3. What was the efficiency of a battery of psychoeducational tests administered at the beginning of the first grade in the prediction of academic achievement in the sixth grade?

While various combinations of instruments produced a higher overall prediction score, in practical terms the Metropolitan Readiness Test was the best overall predictor since it produced correlations which were reasonably high enough so that this instrument could be used alone. Since the Metropolitan Readiness Test is administered by the teacher in a group setting, this is another factor for its consideration as opposed to individually-administered tests such as the Stanford Binet or the ITPA which must be administered by trained examiners.

4. Did this battery of psychoeducational tests assist in the poetential discrimination between children who will maintain normal progress through the grades from children who will be retained in a grade and/or be placed in a special education situation?

To determine if the tests could discriminate between the children who will maintain normal progress and those who will not, a discriminate function analysis was performed on the first grade test scores of a sample of children who were retained and/or placed in special education classes and another group which had maintained normal age grade progress. Again, and while all the instruments used in concert tended to discriminate more strongly, the largest mean difference between the two samples on any of the predictor measures was by far the Metropolitan Readiness Test. For practical purposes, this difference indicated that this instrument alone could be used for screening.

Participant attrition is one of the drawbacks to any longitudinal research or evaluation study. While attrition rates for the samples in the study differed with an overall attrition rate of 32%, several comparisons were made among the reduced samples and the original samples on their performance on measures either at preschool or at the beginning of first grade. Since no statistical differences could be reported, it would appear that differential attrition did not take place to the point where this would affect the study.

General Discussion

This report has attempted to summarize the educational progress of a sample of children exposed to one of the earliest Head Start experiences. Since 1965, Head Start has been studied many times, These studies have reached the point where we now recognize that Head Start, by itself, is not a panacea for the educational disabilities associated with economic disadvantage. This recognition has led to many changes;

preschool curriculums have been revised and improved; Follow-Through programs were initiated; and more open patterns of classroom organization have been used to foster a more developmental educational process.

In this context, this report is primarily historical. It presents data which can be used as a baseline by which to judge improvements in the system of compensatory education to the point that hopefully the two year deficit in grade level achievement which was originally reported for these children would represent a low water mark in the concerted efforts to improve the educational process for economically disadvantaged children.

In the original 1966 description of the Hartford Head Start program, a considerable emphasis was placed upon the development of appropriate social skills, academic habits, attitudes. To the extent that it can be presumed that such behavior is related to the demonstration of minimal adjustment patterns in regular grades, the original program can be judged moderately successful. A significantly smaller percentage of Head Start children were placed in special education or retained in grade. It is a necess presumption that the children who were removed from the regular pattern of age to grade promotions had failed, under the present educational system, to maintain appropriate social or academic habits.

The lack of significant differences in academic achievement on standardized measur in the sixth grade between Head Start and Non-Head Start children is consistent with the majority of evaluations of the early Head Start programs. However, it must again be stressed that the early programs were not designed to sustain academic achievement and were often using untested curriculum models and teaching methods. Goals of enhanced academic achievement cannot be anticipated by evaluators without there having been serious efforts to maximize the system to foster and maintain those goals.

We have demonstrated that we can predict a high percentage of children who will fail to progress as expected in the elementary school. Additionally, we have shown that the Metropolitan Readiness Test, a teacher-administered test, provided for a large percentage of the potential prediction. The purpose of predictions is as a screening tool to identify those children who might best profit from early intervention and remediation. However, prediction, even if perfect, does not offer solutions for prevention. Concerted studies should be initiated to test alternative models for amelioration of social or academic problems among the most high-risk children. In this area, our evaluation must necessarily lead to the asking of additional questions rather than presentation of solutions.

Date 25 June 1974

1973-74 SADC - TITLE I ESEA PROJECT EVALUATION

Town Hartford

Prgm Director Lillian J. Ransom

Address 42 Charter Oak Avenue

Prgm Evaluator Robert I Nearine

Program Title Head Start-Child Development (HSCD)

Period of Program:
(X) sch yr only
( ) summer only
( ) sch yr & sum

Program length in weeks 38

Project Number: 64-1,2

Program Funds:
SADC: $ 87,292
Title I: $ 6,288
_____: $_____
(Specify any other)

1. Program Participants

Total public school pupils 460

Total nonpublic school pupils -

2. Schools where programs took place:

See page 4, narrative

Grade level breakdown for all pupils served:

Pk	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Other
460														

3. Economic and educational criteria used to select pupils for services of the program:

See page 8, narrative

4. Number and type of staff to whom SADC or Title I funds were paid:

3 Teachers
1 Administrator
3 Paraprofessionals

5. Principal objectives related to pupils' achievement and attitudes:

See pages 3 - 5, narrative

6. Description of program activities and services:

Operated in three churches, two community centers, and four public school buildings, HSCD provides comprehensive preschool instructional, supportive, health, and social services to some 460 PK youngsters and their families. Funding provides for staff salaries, evaluative testing, and some additional psychological services.

7. **Evaluation of the principal goals of the program, measures used, results, and an interpretation of what the results mean.**

   a. An independent analysis of PPVT test results showed that while Hartford's HSCD children started the year some 18 months lower than their age norm in language development, 8 months later these same children had improved an average of 13 months, and were now only 8 months below language development expectancy. These results were interpreted as representing excellent progress in language development during the HSCD and kindergarten years.

   b. In similar fashion, when the PPVT results were compared for HSCD youngsters in seven Hartford inner-city schools, these children were making significantly better progress in language development than were their peers.

   c. Parents were highly supportive of the HSCD program in terms of its effects upon their youngsters. At the same time they also reported that while a large percentage of the parents had visited the centers and worked with the teachers, smaller numbers reported serving on an advisory council or helping out during a field trip.

   d. When kindergarten teachers were asked to compare HSCD children as a group, on 22 performance variables, substantial degrees of improvement were reported from Fall to Spring of the year.

   e. A longitudinal University of Connecticut follow-up study of HSCD youngsters eight years later reported that as a group, fewer retentions and special class placements coupled to higher test scores were recorded when these youngsters were compared to a comparable peer group.

8. Title I funds are provided to serve children from low-income areas regardless of whether they attend public or private schools. If children going to nonpublic schools resided in the school attendance areas validated for Title I, ESEA services in your community, provide the following:

   a. Where Title I services were rendered, indicate the number of children and the name(s) of the nonpublic schools they attended.

      N/A

   b. Describe the specific services nonpublic school children received.

   c. Indicate the dollar amount of Title I, ESEA funds used for the above services.

9. Aside from the evaluation made of program objectives, indicate any <u>successful outcomes</u> resulting from Title I or SADC efforts in the town during the past year.

   N/A

10. Aside from the evaluation made of program objectives, indicate any <u>problems</u> resulting from Title I or SADC efforts in the town during the past year.

    No problems.

11. State the <u>recommendations</u> for the future consideration of the programs. Base the recommendations on the findings and conclusions of this evaluation report.

    Two additional school social workers are needed.

12. Report the standardized test results for program pupils on the following pages. Report results so that pre- and post-test scores are for the <u>same</u> pupils. Report results for only those pupils who were administered the appropriate levels of the test for the pupil's school grade placement.

    The test results are organized to help in a statewide analysis of SADC and Title I. Report scores for a single subtest in reading, math, or language where these are related to the program being offered. Note that group scores have been requested for specific grade levels only on page 4, while page 5 has been organized for all other test information which cannot be included on page 4.

STANDARDIZED TEST INFORMATION FOR READING, MATH, AND LANGUAGE

Town Hartford Proj. # 64-1,2 Type Program Headstart - Child Development

Gr Lvl for Group Scores	Test Instrument Information: Name of Test and Year Published	Name of Subtest	Pre & Post Test Lvls	Pre & Post Test Forms	No. of Pupils Tested	Raw Scores and Grade Equivalence: Time of Pre Test*	Mean Scores r.s. / g.e.	Time of Post Test*	Mean Scores r.s. / g.e.
Reading									
Gr 1									
Gr 2									
Gr 3									
Gr 4									
Gr 5									
Gr 6									
Gr 7									
Gr 8									
Math									
Gr 1									
Gr 2									
Gr 3									
Gr 4									
Gr 5									
Gr 6									
Gr 7									
Gr 8									
Language						CA at Pre Test	Mean Scores r.s. / MA	CA at Post Test	Mean Scores r.s. / MA
Pk	Peabody P.V.Test,1965			A B	248	4-4	32 / 3-3	5-0	44 / 4-4
K									

*Record date of testing in grade equivalent units. If the pretest is between September 15 and October 14 for fourth graders, record it as 4.1, for example. If the post-test is between May 15 and June 14, record it as 4.9. If during other months, use the same rationale.